AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims below replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for use in a telephony system, comprising:

a digital interface for ~~communicating~~ connection with a stimulus ~~device~~ telephone;

a packet interface for communicating with a packet-based network; and

a controller to receive stimulus control information from the digital interface and to encapsulate the stimulus control information into one or more packets for transmission over the packet-based network through the packet interface.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information into an Internet Protocol packet.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface includes a UART interface.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface includes a time compression multiplex interface.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller adds a destination address of a telephone switch system into the one or more packets.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller adds a destination address of a second stimulus telephone into the one or more packets.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information is according to a first stimulus language, and wherein the stimulus control information remains in the first stimulus language after encapsulation.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information without translating the stimulus control information into a different form.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the controller encapsulates the stimulus control information by adding header information according to a network protocol.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the network protocol header information includes an Internet Protocol header.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the controller adds further header information according to a transport protocol.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the further header information includes a User Datagram Protocol header.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller also scrambles the stimulus message before encapsulation.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the controller encrypts the one or more packets.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a receiver to receive the one or more packets, the receiver including an element to decapsulate the one or more packets to extract the stimulus control information.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the receiver is associated with a second stimulus device, and wherein the extracted stimulus control information is in a native stimulus language of the second stimulus device.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information includes at least one of hook state information and key press event information, the controller to encapsulate the at least one of the hook state information and key press event information into the one or more packets.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information includes a command selected from the group consisting of a handset volume control command, a handset connect/disconnect command, and a ringer activation command, the controller to encapsulate the command selected from the group consisting of the handset volume control command, the handset connect/disconnect command, and the ringer activation command.

~~19.~~ (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a telephony system, comprising:

communicating stimulus control information with a stimulus telephone ~~device~~ through a first interface connected to the stimulus telephone, and packet information with a packet-based network through a packet interface;

encapsulating stimulus control information received from the first interface; and

transmitting the encapsulated stimulus control information as at least one packet to the packet interface.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, further comprising:

decapsulating one or more packets received from the packet interface and containing stimulus control information; and

transmitting the stimulus control information of the decapsulated one or more packets to the first interface.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the stimulus control information is in a native stimulus language, and wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes inserting the stimulus control information in its native stimulus language into a payload of the at least one packet.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes adding a network protocol header to the stimulus control information.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information includes adding an Internet Protocol header.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information further includes adding a User Datagram Protocol header.

26. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising scrambling the stimulus control information before encapsulating.

27. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising encrypting the at least one packet.

28. (Currently Amended) An article including one or more machine-readable storage media containing instructions for call control in a telephony system, the instructions when executed causing a device to:

receive data according to a stimulus protocol from a first interface connected to a stimulus telephone;

encapsulate the data into one or more packets; and

communicate the one or more packets to a packet-based data network.

29. (Original) The article of claim 28, wherein the one or more storage media contain instructions that when executed causes the device to:

receive a packet containing data according to the stimulus protocol;

decapsulate the packet; and

communicate the data according to the stimulus protocol to the first interface.

30. (Currently ~~Amended~~) A data signal embodied in a carrier wave and containing instructions for call control in a telephony system, the instructions when executed causing a device to:

receive at least one packet containing a stimulus message according to a first language;

decapsulate the at least one packet to extract the stimulus message according to the first language; and

send the stimulus message according to the first language to a first interface connected to a stimulus ~~device~~ telephone.

31. (Currently ~~Amended~~) The data signal of claim 30, further containing instructions that when executed causes [[a]] the device to:

receive a stimulus message according to the first language through the first interface connected to ~~from~~ the stimulus ~~device~~ telephone; and

encapsulate the stimulus message according to a first language into at least one packet.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in a telephony system, comprising:

means for receiving a stimulus message through a first interface connected to ~~from~~ a stimulus ~~device~~ telephone;

means for encapsulating the stimulus message into at least one packet; and

means for transmitting the at least one packet to a packet-based network.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an interface card adapted to be inserted into a slot of the stimulus ~~device~~ telephone, the interface card comprising the digital interface, the packet interface, and the controller.

36. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface is adapted to exchange the stimulus control information with the stimulus ~~device~~ telephone.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the stimulus control information contains a command according to a stimulus protocol selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset volume control, handset connect, and handset disconnect, the controller to encapsulate the command selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset volume control, handset connect, and handset disconnect in the one or more packets.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a receiver to receive one or more inbound packets containing inbound stimulus control information, the controller to decapsulate the one or more inbound packets to extract the inbound stimulus control information.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 38, wherein each of the one or more inbound packets contains a User Datagram Protocol (UDP) port number, the controller to determine from the UDP port number whether the corresponding inbound packet contains voice data or stimulus control information.

40. (Currently ~~Amended~~) The method of claim 20, further comprising providing an interface card to be inserted into a slot of the stimulus ~~device~~ telephone, the interface card having the first interface and the packet interface,

wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information and transmitting the encapsulated stimulus control information and transmitting the encapsulated stimulus control information is performed by the interface card.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein encapsulating the stimulus control information comprises encapsulating a command according to a stimulus protocol selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset volume control, handset connect, and handset disconnect.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein each of the received one or more packets contains a User Datagram Protocol (UDP) port number, the method further comprising determining from the UDP port number whether the corresponding received packet contains voice data or stimulus control information.

43. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 28, wherein encapsulating the data according to the stimulus protocol comprises encapsulating one of an off-hook stimulus command, on-hook stimulus command, handset volume control stimulus command, handset connect stimulus command, and handset disconnect stimulus command.

44. (Previously Presented) The data signal of claim 30, wherein receiving the at least one packet containing the stimulus message comprises receiving the at least one packet containing stimulus message containing at least a command selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset volume control, handset connect, and handset disconnect.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the stimulus message contains at least a command selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset

volume control, handset connect, and handset disconnect, the means for encapsulating to encapsulate the command selected from the group consisting of off-hook, on-hook, handset volume control, handset connect and handset disconnect.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising:

means for decapsulating the at least one packet received from the packet-based network and containing the stimulus message.

47. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising means for encrypting the at least one packet.

48. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising means for scrambling the stimulus message before encapsulating.

49. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the interface card is adapted to be inserted into a slot of a telephone.

50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 40, wherein providing the interface card comprises inserting the interface card into a slot of [[a]] the stimulus telephone.

51. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digital interface is adapted to communicate with the stimulus telephone through an input/output port of the stimulus telephone.

52. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein communicating the stimulus control information comprises communicating the stimulus control information through the interface and an input/output port of the stimulus telephone.

53. (New) The article of claim 28, wherein receiving the data according to the stimulus protocol comprises receiving the data according to the stimulus protocol through the first interface and an input/output port of the stimulus telephone.

54. (New) The data signal of claim 30, wherein sending the stimulus message comprises sending the stimulus message to the first interface and an input/output port of the stimulus telephone.

55. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein receiving means is for receiving the stimulus message through the first interface and an input/output port of the stimulus telephone.